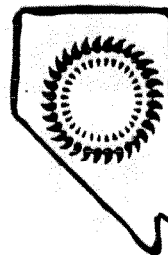


NEVADA CLIMATE SUMMARY



Office of the State Climatologist

Offices: 226 and 322
Mackay Science
(702) 784-1723
(702) 784-6995

John W. James
State Climatologist
Mackay Science Hall
University of Nevada-Reno
Reno, Nevada 89557

Nevada State Library
and Archives

MAY 1 8 2005

MAY 1995
VOLUME 12, NUMBER 5

SYNOPSIS

STATE PUBLICATIONS

May was one of the coolest, wettest, cloudiest 5th months on record. In fact, several locations logged the wettest May in records that go back in some cases over 100 years. For example, the Fallon climate record began in 1889 and Hawthorne in 1888. May 1995 was not only the wettest recorded May but the wettest for any month at these locations! The 3.38" at Fallon, and 3.14" at Hawthorne represented about 2/3 of the normal annual precipitation! At Gabbs, Lorraine Clifton measured 5.83" in May, or over 7 times the normal for May, and more than the average annual amount of 5.00"! The number of precipitation days at many locations were also records for May, with between 15 and 25 wet days at some sites. Only a few locations in the Extreme South had below normal rainfall.

Water Year Precipitation (Oct. 1, 1994 - May 31, 1995) is now 1 & 1/2 - 2 times normal along the Eastern Sierra Nevada Watersheds, 1 & 1/4 - 1 & 1/2 in Northwestern Nevada and the East and in the Humboldt River Area, 1 & 1/4 - 2 times normal in Central Nevada, and 1 & 3/4 - 2 & 1/4 times normal in the South. The Upper Colorado River Area above Lake Mead is also well above normal. In essence the 1994-95 will be logged as one of the wettest on record Statewide, ranking right up there with the wet years of the early 1980's.

TEMPERATURE

Temperatures generally averaged 2-5 degrees below normal, with unusually warm nights and unusually cool days due to the persistent cloud cover Statewide. The mercury did manage to reach the high 90's along the Colorado River, with 100 at Laughlin and Overton on the last day of May. Nighttime lows were not very low, with a 16 recorded at Kyle Canyon on one of the few clear mornings on the 16th. Lee Canyon, at 8400 feet on Mt. Charleston, also had 10" of snowfall this month. The extreme for May of 116 at Cottonwood Cove in 1983 and -7 in Pine Valley in 1990 were not approached.

PRECIPITATION

So many new records were set for May, that only a few will be noted here. In addition to Fallon, Hawthorne, and Gabbs mentioned earlier, the following locations also surpassed previous May amounts.

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>RECORD BEGAN</u>	<u>MAY 1995</u>	<u>PREVIOUS WET MAY</u>	
Golconda	1870	2.93"	2.91"	1917
Wells	1870	3.82"	3.45"	1872
Minden	1906	2.86"	2.16"	1942
Yerington	1908	3.04"	2.74"	1953
Jiggs	1910	5.09"	3.95"	1962
Lahontan Dam	1912	2.57"	2.17"	1913

The wettest reported location this May was Jarbidge with 8.53". Adaven had 6.37" and Mountain City had 6.22"; also a new record. Gabbs had 5.83" with 5.48" at Jarbidge 4 North, 5.39" at Lake Valley, 5.23" at Arthur, 5.20" at Emigrant Pass (4 times normal), and 5.09" at Jiggs. In addition John Weaver measured 4.64" at Wellington, and Donna Andrews 4.62" at Contact, both new records for May.

On the dry end of the precipitation measuring stick, less than 1/2 the normal rain fell in some Nevada communities such as Spring Valley (a Las Vegas suburb) where Lori James had only .09", Callville Bay .11", and Valley of Fire .12".

SUNSHINE, WIND & EVAPORATION

Sunshine was in short supply this month, with record or near record cloudiness for May Statewide. Wind speed averages were near normal with 60 mph gusts in W Nevada at mid-month.

Evaporation was well below normal with cool temperatures and lack of sun the culprits. A few examples are Overton with only 12.23" of pan evaporation, Pahrump 9.92", Honey Lake 6.13", UNR 6.10", Shoshone 4.91", and Minden 4.75".

NOTE: Did you know that there is an 11,000 foot difference between Nevada's highest and lowest climate stations? An automatic system on top of 11,700 foot Bald Mountain in Great Basin National Park is the highest, while Laughlin on the Colorado River is the lowest at only 500 feet above sea level! The highest storage precipitation gage is Wheeler Camp at 9900 feet in GBNP, while the highest "manned" location is Lee Canyon (observer Steve Brittingham) at 8400 feet.

NOTE 2: Nevada's most intense recorded rainfall occurred on May 29, 1896 at Cloverdale Ranch, about half way between Gabbs and Tonopah. Observer F. G. Troy reported 8.50" in one hour, with 6.50" in a half hour! He also reported that large hailstones stripped trees of leaves and that the first half hour was "a regular waterspout" with much flooding. The Cloverdale Ranch still exists but is now abandoned. No one lived nearby in 1896, nor do they in 1995. Such an old record is hard to verify, but newspaper reports can help.

The Carson Weekly wrote, "Friday morning hailstones fell nearly an inch in circumference and the last fall was accompanied by a deluge of rain, the like of which is seldom seen. The Carson River rose 2 feet".

The Walker Lake Bulletin reported not only rain, but weather that also caused transportation problems, "A washout between Wabuska and the Reservation last Friday caused four cars on the north-bound train to leave the track. Nobody was hurt. Hailstones as large as quail eggs fell in Hawthorne last Friday. It sounded as if old Jupiter Pluvius was throwing stones on the house roofs".

The Carson Morning News observed, "Friday's hail storm was very disastrous to the west side of Carson Valley mowing down the alfalfa and killing chickens. On one ranch, eighteen fowls succumbed".

The Free Press of Elko reported, "The heavy storm of last Friday did considerable damage in Huntington and on the South Fork. Mr. Martin had just finished seeding his grain. The rain washed it all out. The fruit trees on Walther's Ranch were also badly damaged by hailstones".

The Central Nevadan stated, "A cloud burst occurred at Empire on last Thursday afternoon. A torrent rushed into the river near Morgan Mill, taking with it some 1,000 tons of tailings".

It seems that F. G. Troy made an accurate observation of the effects of a very severe thunderstorm, of which there were several reported Statewide that day. Unfortunately most of them missed the few rain gages that were extant in those early years.

John W. James
State Climatologist